

# The Framingham Circuit

Newsletter of the Framingham Amateur Radio Association April 1998, Vol. 65, No. 4

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## President's Message

FARA is people. It is hams who also happen to be dedicated, interesting, helpful, intelligent, sharing, etc., etc., etc. -- you get the picture. So much of what this club does appears to be seamless, effortless, it just happens. However, for every club activity there is a person, or more often, a group of persons that make that activity happen. The total energy output is phenomenal. Just look at the number of activities that this club is involved with over a years period: two Flea-Markets, Field-Day weekend, major contests at the club, monthly meetings, Wednesday and Saturday club openings, Mass QSO Party sponsorship, two License-in-A-Weekend classes, outing/cookout, Flag-Day Parade support, FARA Scholarship, kit-building, guest speakers, disaster drills, W1FY Repeater, FARA Web Page, The Circuit monthly newsletter, CEMARC/ARRL support, monthly board meetings, equipment maintenance, solving community EMI problems, FARA library, FARA Night Out, Tour-de-Fram support. I'm sure I've left something out. FARA is part of the hobby. Members like to do it, they want to do it. They just do it. Spread the word. 73

Jim, W1EQW

## FARA Board Approves PacketCluster Pilot

by Charlie, NC1N

On Monday, March 23, the FARA Board voted to approve construction of a pilot PacketCluster DX spotting node. The vote comes after several months of work by a special committee established to study the establishment of a node.

Many FARA members (and other hams in the FARA membership area) enjoy the use of DX spotting packet nodes to help in their pursuits of contesting and DX. However, the existing nodes do not fully cover the FARA area. Members report frequent disconnection from nodes, failure to connect, etc.

The committee investigated several sites and settled on the high ground of Hopkinton as well-suited for the purpose. A graphical propagation study performed by committee member Bob, W1RH, is available on the web at: <http://www.tiac.net/users/nc1n/maplist.htm>

Building a node will require hardware (2-meter and 220-Mhz digital stations, two TNCs, and a computer) and software (the PacketCluster application and G8BPQ Packet Switch software). If the project were to proceed, the FARA Board wanted it to be revenue-neutral for the club, so the committee sought donations.

At this point, we have identified sufficient resources to build a pilot node, although additional donations will be needed to complete and maintain a permanent site.

We'll keep you informed in the coming months as to our progress.

The committee's report is available on the web at:

<http://www.tiac.net/users/nc1n/march23>

These web pages will move to the FARA web site in the future.

## Changes to the Sunday Night Nets

Starting April 5, the weekly 7:30pm FAREN/ARES and the 8:00pm FARA net, which both air on the 147.15 club repeater, will be combined into a single weekly FARA net airing at 7:30pm each Sunday. Club related news and ARES news as well as any informal statements made by those checking in will be a regular part of the net. Times and places for FAREN/ARES training sessions and emergency practice drills would be announced on the net. Marc, WA1R, who has been coordinating

## Thursday, Apr. 2 This Month's Meeting

Marjie, KA1HIA

Get ready to welcome FARA honorary member Samir Durakovic T99S (ex-T94ON), who will be visiting New England this month from Sarajevo. [Please read more about this months meeting in the newsletter section of the FARA website if you are able to do so.](#)

## Submitting Material to the Circuit

Material may be submitted for publication by sending it directly to the editor. This can be done by phone, by US Mail, or via the Internet (preferred). The deadline for each issue is the Thursday, one week before the monthly meeting.

### by phone

(508) 435-2055 (before 9:00PM please!)

### by mail

Robert Hess, N1UVA  
1 Cold Spring Brook Road  
Hopkinton, MA 01746

### by internet

[n1uva@ultranet.com](mailto:n1uva@ultranet.com)



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both nets will continue to coordinate this single net. By checking into one net instead of two, it is hoped that people's time will be utilized more efficiently. Give it a try and let your club know what you think of these changes. Suggestions are always welcome.

#### **FARA Membership Dues are Due !!**

by Martin, AA1ON  
Club Treasurer

So far 103 FARA dues payments have been received, but many 1997 members have not yet renewed. We have tried to ensure that your Circuit address labels accurately show your membership status, if a '98' is shown, we have received your payment. Since this month's newsletter will be the last we will send to members who have not yet paid, please check the label and, if appropriate, send your payments to the Club PO Box.

#### **Red Cross Training for Hams**

Submitted by Marc, WA1R

On Saturday, May 16th, from 1pm to 4pm, A training seminar on Red Cross Damage Assessment for Amateur Radio Operators will be presented by Kevin O'Connell, the Emergency Services Director for the Massachusetts Bay Chapter of the American Red Cross. The Training will be held at the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency Headquarters facility in Framingham.

This training is intended to allow amateur radio operators to participate as part of the Damage Assessment team in a large scale disaster, rather than solely as communicators.

From my personal experience with the NO NAME storm a few years back, can be one of the most interesting facets of your public service experiences.

No registration is required.

Directions:

MEMA Headquarters is on Route 9 Eastbound in Framingham, just west of route 126. From the west, take the Mass Pike to the first Framingham exit. Head east on Route 9, until just after the State Police Headquarters turn into the fenced in area. From the east, take the Mass Pike and exit at the first Framingham

Exit, head west on rt 30. Route 30 will merge with Route 9. Follow route 9 until the first exit, marked Framingham State College but take an immediate left on the ramp so that you take a U turn and head east on route 9. Be advised that taking a left turn at the Lights at Walgreen's is illegal. Head now East on Route 9, until just after the State Police Headquarters, turn into MEMA Headquarters. The facility we'll be meeting in is an underground bunker, with a set of doors controlling access. You can't miss the three 180 foot radio towers on the premises.

#### **Hams to provide support for "Framingham Cleanup Day"**

One of the ways that the club pays its "rent" for its facility is through its community support. Each year, FARA supports walkathons, road races and the many other events that occur here. April is an especially busy month for the club this year as there are many events occurring in a two-week period, starting April 8 and ending April 26.

On April 8, Skywarn spotter training is planned while on April 20, club members will participate in one role or another in the Boston Marathon. Crews will be supporting not only the Red Cross, but also the town's emergency response/communications effort by manning the town Emergency Operations Center during the event.

On April 21-22, the town may participate in Response 98, a statewide emergency preparedness exercise, while on April 25, the club will support "Framingham Cleanup Day." April 26 is WalkAmerica Sunday.

On April 25, hams will be needed to help coordinate a townwide cleanup effort that is planned by various organizations. Full details will be provided at the meeting, but, approximately 15 or 20 hams will be needed to make sure that cleaning crews and supplies are dispatched and picked up and that relief crews and materials are sent to the proper spot.

If you are interested in helping in any of these events, please contact WA1R, at the number listed in the Club Information box on this newsletter. Or, you can send e-mail to [sterno@tlac.net](mailto:sterno@tlac.net).

#### **The Framingham Circuit Celebrates April Fools Day**

##### **New Temporary License Class**

In an unprecedented event, on Tuesday this past week, all amateur radio vendors, and many national electronic chain outlets, in an effort to shore-up the sagging radio sales picture, were given the authority to issue amateur radio call signs to new radio purchasers. The ruling from the FCC in docket APR-001 allows for the call sign block of "WT" along with the district #, for all vendors to issue. These "try before you study" licenses will be issued for a thirty day on-air trial period at the general class level. It works like this: a potential ham who doesn't know if the hobby is worth the effort of all the study time, is authorized to operate for a period of one month along with the purchase of a radio. The new operator will be authorized at the General class level with a "WT" call sign i.e. WT2XYZ. At the end of the trial period, the new ham can enroll in a class, or take their exam from a local VEC or from the vendor, which is also now authorized to give radio exams. If the operator decides the hobby isn't worth the aggravation they find on the HF bands, he/she can return the radio for a full refund.

##### **DXpedition to New Island**

Worldradio will be sending a select group of amateurs to a new island that has appeared due to volcano activity. This will be a grand opportunity for those selected to make Amateur Radio history by activating a new island.

The new island is located in the South Pacific at 30 degrees South latitude and 130 degrees East longitude. The island is claimed by Australia and has been named "Batguano Island."

We will be operating using the call WR6WR/V4026R with operation in the 2 Meter, 220 and 440 bands, using a 96 element Quad antenna on a 485 ft boom with 5 watts of power. Frequencies will be 143.890, 221.990 and 419.990, all simplex frequencies.

Amateurs interested in being a part of this event should be able to earn DXCC on all three bands within 12 hours. We are encouraging applications from all amateurs, regardless of license class. For more information call 1-800-555-0000 or see web information at: <http://www.IamAnAprilFool.com>

## Swap Board

### The Following Items are for sale:

- **Tri-band beam, 14 ft. boom, 10-15-20 in great condition w/manual - \$175**
- **Commodore Computer 128/64 w/printer, disk drive, monitor, manuals, boxes, all excel. cond., extra disks, etc. - \$150**
- **PK-64 works great with above Commodore, w/manual and boxes - \$45**

Call anytime K1CEI in Waltham  
(781) 893-3377.

*I have a virtually complete set of QST covering the years 1990-1996 to give away. They can be picked up at my QTH in Shrewsbury or I will bring them to a club meeting. First call gets them. Contact me at:*

[wa6ilt@amsat.org](mailto:wa6ilt@amsat.org)

or phone at 508-845-6663. Dave  
Reinhart, WA6ILT

Sources For Articles on the Previous Page  
"New Temporary License Class"  
Submitted anonymously  
Originally found in the Internet newsgroup:  
rec.radio.amateur.ds  
"DXpedition to New Island"  
Worldradio April 1998: 29

### QSL Card

The monthly QSL card will return next month. In the coming months look for a card submitted by Paul, N1VAM and a very special card from our guest at the March Meeting.

### FARA Night Out

Don't forget FARA Night Out on May 2. More information and a reservation form can be found on the enclosure with this month's newsletter.

### Membership Dues

Annual membership dues are as follows: (Make checks payable to FARA)  
Regular FARA \$10  
Student / Retired \$5  
Repeater (voluntary) \$10

### Marathon, WalkAmerica highlight busy April

by Marc, WA1R

April is traditionally one of the busiest public service months in the FARA calendar with the Boston Marathon and March of Dimes WalkAmerica Walkathon as two key events.

Although it might be a tad late to join those who will be working on Marathon Day, if you are interested you can contact WA1IDA at 650-9440 for further information.

There's still time to participate in WalkAmerica, though. Slated for April 26, the 10K Walkathon will wind its way from Framingham High School and on along Concord Street to the downtown area where it will turn back north up Union Avenue, pass the Common and then head down Central Street toward the High School where it began.

Amateurs will be needed at four checkpoints. And, operators will be needed in the pickup van and/or supply van. There will also be a net control station. All told, seven or eight operators will be needed for the even which begins about 9 a.m. Operators will be needed at 8:30 for a briefing.

A signup sheet will be available at the club meeting or you can contact WA1R at the phone number listed in the Club Information box in this newsletter.

There may also be the possibility of club involvement with the Framingham Cleanup Day, as well as in the state's emergency management response exercise Response 98. More information will be available either elsewhere in this newsletter or at the meeting.

### Skywarn Spotter Training at Club Shack April 8

There will be a Skywarn spotter training session at the club shack on April 8. Sponsored by the FAAREN/Skywarn net, the training will feature a guest

speaker from the National Weather Service who will present training materials on how to recognize and report severe weather occurrences.

Every year, thousands of hams across the country are the "real-time" eyes and ears of the weather service providing first-hand reports of tornadoes, hailstorms, or thunderstorms in the spring, summer, and fall. In the winter, hams provide snowstorm information, including snow depths, wind information, or ice and snow conditions.

It's an important job that the Amateur community has supported for years. It's a job whose need is still paramount even in an age of Doppler radar and computer measurement. Many times, even these instruments provide only a "global" view of an area. In other words, the view is of a wider area than that which may be impacted by a thunderstorm or hailstorm. The Skywarn spotter network provides the local "eyes and ears" the Weather Service needs to accomplish its mission.

To that end, the FAAREN net has agreed to become part of Eastern Mass. Skywarn and will respond whenever weather warnings warrant net activation. To effectively participate, the net is sponsoring the evening of training beginning at 7 p.m. April 8.

The training is open to everyone in FARA and any others who may not be members but who may be interested in participating.

It's a rewarding evening that will lead to credentials as a Skywarn spotter and will lead you to some exciting participation in rewarding radio work.

Don't think, though, that the evening is open only to new spotters. It is open to those who may have taken spotter training some years ago, but who want to renew or update their training.

So, plan to attend the spotter training, you'll be glad you did.

### FARA Horizons

Apr 2: Monthly Meeting  
Apr 6: Skywarn Spotter Training  
Apr 19: Board Meeting  
Apr 25: Framingham Cleanup Day  
May 2: FARA Night Out